

## **Touch by pookiestheone**

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**Summary:**

I've decided Mrs. Harrington's first name is Eve.

## Touch

Billy was always touching Steve in public. It wasn't that he didn't like it, but this was Hawkins where things like that only happened if guys were drunk or high or won some game. Billy didn't seem to need an excuse. But it didn't go unnoticed.

"Steve, what's with you and Hargrove?" Jonathan asked one day as they stood outside the school waiting for Nance.

"What?" Steve began to fiddle with the hem of his jacket.

"A few months ago he nearly killed you after the two of you tried to fuck each other up for weeks."

"He tried to fuck me up. I just wanted to be left alone."

"And yet now he's hanging around all the time. I see you and I see Billy; if he's not beside you, he's not far behind. You're like a couple."

"What the hell do you mean, Byers?" Steve bristled as he pulled his jacket tight around his waist. "Just because we aren't at each other's throats, we're a couple?"

"I said 'like a couple'. Don't get me wrong, Billy's actually OK, not nearly as much of an asshole as he used to be and if that's because of you then good. Will said he apologised to Lucas for something, even gave him and Max some money for the arcade. I didn't know someone like Billy knew how to do apologies. There's enough shit going on in this town and now he's one less thing to worry about."

"Yeah, well, guess people can change. Sometimes for the better."

"And it doesn't bother you then?"

"That he changed? Why would it?"

"No, that's he's so ..." Jonathan paused, slightly embarrassed and looking for the right word. "That he's so friendly?"

"I prefer friendly to having the shit beat out of me any day."

“No, I mean he seems to be ... uh, affectionate?”

“Affectionate?” Steve felt a shiver of warning. “No idea what you’re talking about.”

“OK,” Jonathan shrugged, “guess it’s nothing. Just Nance ...”

“How about you and Nance find something else to talk about. And where the hell is she?” Steve zipped up his jacket. “Look, I’m not hanging around here any longer. I’ll see you both later.”

The conversation nagged at Steve for the rest of the day until that night while they were lying stretched across his bed beside each other, books open face down on their chests, he had to say something.

“Billy, you need to back off,” he blurted out.

“Why?” Billy asked as he sat up. “What did I do?”

“Shit, that didn’t sound right. I mean when we’re out. Or at school.”

“Uh ... OK. But it helps if I know what I’m doing wrong.”

“You’re too ... You’re always finding some reason to touch me. Or put your arm around my shoulders.”

Billy looked down at his hands. “I thought you liked that.”

“Yes, definitely. When we’re alone you can touch me all you want, anywhere you want, but not when there are other people around, not as much anyway. Because, you know, they might think ...”

“That we’re fucking? Is that it?”

“You want people to know that, Billy? You want your father to know that? Want to be called a fag? Cocksucker? Bum fucker?” Steve had suddenly become louder.

“All right, calm down for Christ’s sake or you’ll tell everyone anyway.” He stood, grabbed his book from the floor where it had fallen and picked up his jacket. “I’m going to go. See you tomorrow.”

“Billy, c’mon don’t be like that.”

“I’m not being anything, Steve. I’m going home that’s all.”

Before Steve could say anything else he opened the bedroom door and was gone.

“That went well,” Steve grumbled as he tossed his book against the wall.

“Steve? What on earth are you doing?” his mother called from downstairs.

“Sorry, Mom, I dropped my book.”

“I’m sure you did, but try not to drop it so hard next time. Billy left early tonight. You all finished?”

“Yeah.” *Maybe. Shit!*

Billy threw the car into reverse and stomped down so hard the tires protested as he swerved backwards out of the driveway. A woman further down the street who was putting her garbage out looked up in surprise then stood, hands on hips, shaking her head as Billy sped by.

“Fuck off, you old bitch,” Billy yelled to no one as he reached forward and cranked the radio as loud as he could. Before he knew it he was blowing past the “Welcome to Hawkins” on his way to exactly nowhere. Finally he screeched to a halt, spraying gravel from the shoulder everywhere. He just sat for a few seconds before climbing out, hopping up on the hood and lighting a cigarette.

*Maybe the old man’s right. Maybe I’m just a fuck up who’ll never be anything else.*

Steve had been the best thing to happen to him since ... in a long time and that despite the fact that he had fought against it - and him - from the beginning, fearing that he would mess it up if he even tried. Just like he always did. It was easier to make Steve an enemy, make himself a hateful prick. He still wasn’t exactly sure how that had changed. One minute it seemed he was beating the shit out of

him at the Byers' and the next they were making out in the Camaro on some side road.

He lay back on the hood and took along drag on his cigarette. Of course it wasn't like that at all, but he liked the idea that after seeming to do nothing but fail he suddenly and unexpectedly succeeded. And if he were honest he liked touching Steve because it reminded him it was all real; it was the reassurance he still needed. Now he had to change that. It wasn't that he didn't understand Steve's concern. He supposed it was better to be safe than sorry, but he still felt that he was losing something - again.

"What the hell is wrong with me!" he yelled into the empty sky. If he had to give up one thing, not even give up just ease off, to keep the rest why was he even hesitating. He climbed down off the hood, got into the car and started it. Checking the clock he saw it was just after nine. *Still lots of time.*

Eve Harrington looked up from her book when the doorbell rang. No one ever called at this time of night. She opened the door cautiously then, smiling in recognition, wider.

"Did you forget something, Billy?"

"Yes, Mrs. Harrington. Sorry to be so late."

"No, no, it's fine. Come in." After she closed the door, she turned and called up the stairs on the way back to the living room. "Steve. It's Billy."

Steve came halfway down and stood looking at him.

"Sorry," Billy said quietly. "I'm a jerk."

"You better come up." He waited until Billy was beside him then took his hand. "You know you can always talk to me about what's wrong because God knows it's just as likely my fault. You don't have to take off."

Billy squeezed his hand. "Yeah but I'm a jerk, remember."

"Good. And just so you know, I don't date jerks."

**Author's Note:**

I've decided Mrs. Harrington's first name is Eve.